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Thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since the previous report of the Secretary-General was issued, on 26 February 2010 (S/2010/105).

2. The situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remained generally stable during the reporting period. The cessation of hostilities established in August 2006 between Israel and Lebanon continued to hold, enabling the parties to enjoy the longest period of stability in their recent history. Yet, although the parties remained committed to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), a number of violations occurred and no progress was recorded with regard to key obligations under the resolution. Amid allegations of continued arms transfers to Hizbullah, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006), a perceptible increase in tension between the parties was recorded during the reporting period. That raised the spectre of a miscalculation by either party leading to a resumption of hostilities, with potentially devastating consequences for Lebanon and the region.

3. Nevertheless, the functioning of the national unity Government in Lebanon over the past six months has translated into a broadening consensus among the country's leaders regarding the maintenance of domestic stability. Municipal elections were held throughout Lebanon during the month of May in a generally calm and peaceful atmosphere, which was disrupted only by a few unconnected, localized incidents.

4. Bilateral relations between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic have continued to make progress. President Michel Sleiman met with President Bashar Al-Assad in Damascus on 15 June. Prime Minister Saad Hariri also met with President Al-Assad in Damascus on 18 and 30 May. Furthermore, a delegation of high-ranking Lebanese officials visited the Syrian capital twice during the reporting period for a review of agreements between the two countries.

5. The Gaza flotilla incident that occurred on 31 May raised tension in the region and reverberated strongly in Lebanon. A number of public demonstrations of protest against Israel and of solidarity with the victims were held throughout the country.

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II. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

6. Since the issuance of my previous report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), Lebanese security agencies have continued to coordinate their investigations of alleged Israeli spy networks in Lebanon.

A. Situation in the UNIFIL area of operations

7. The situation in the mission's area of operations remained stable and generally quiet during the reporting period. The Governments of Lebanon and Israel reaffirmed their commitment to the cessation of hostilities and the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

8. The Israel Defense Forces continued their occupation of the northern part of Ghajar village and an adjacent area of land north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Notwithstanding the obligation of Israel to withdraw from the area, UNIFIL was actively engaged with both parties to facilitate such a withdrawal on the basis of its proposal of August 2008. Over the past three months, UNIFIL and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon have held a number of talks with senior representatives of both parties. The discussions have recently intensified with a view to reaching a conclusion regarding this long-standing issue without further delay. In the latest development, on 14 June the Government of Lebanon conveyed to UNIFIL in writing its position on the Israeli response to date concerning the Force's proposal, reasserting Lebanese sovereignty over the area, rejecting changes to the proposal and reaffirming the willingness of Lebanon to continue discussions in the tripartite forum.

9. Israel Defense Forces aircraft — mostly unmanned aerial vehicles but also an increasing number of fighter jets — continued to make almost daily intrusions into Lebanese airspace. The overflights constitute violations of resolution 1701 (2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. UNIFIL protested against all the air violations and asked Israel to cease them immediately. The Government of Lebanon also protested against the violations and demanded that they cease immediately. The Government of Israel maintained that the overflights were security measures that would be necessary until all relevant Security Council resolutions had been implemented, citing in particular the alleged lack of enforcement of the arms embargo as the reason for their continuation.

10. There were several incidents near the Blue Line and ground violations of the Blue Line from the Lebanese side during the reporting period. On 13 April, a tense stand-off occurred between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces in the vicinity of the Lebanese village of Abbasiya, as work was being undertaken by the Israel Defense Forces south of the Blue Line but north of the technical fence. The situation was quickly defused by the mission's intervention and liaison with the parties. On 16 April, a group of Lebanese civilians, led by a Lebanese member of Parliament, demonstrated against the earlier Israel Defense Forces works in the area. The demonstrators crossed the Blue Line, dismantled a concertina-wire fence and placed Lebanese flags on the Israeli technical fence. Lebanese Armed Forces personnel subsequently crossed the Blue Line to put an end to the demonstration and return the civilians north of the Blue Line.

11. On 23 April, another demonstration, led by the same Lebanese member of Parliament, gathered close to the Blue Line, in the Shab'a farms area. A group of four Lebanese civilians, ignoring the warnings of UNIFIL, crossed the Blue Line and photographed the area. Subsequently, Lebanese Armed Forces personnel persuaded the civilians to return north of the Blue Line.

12. Throughout those two incidents, UNIFIL was in contact with both parties and emphasized the primary responsibility of the parties to respect the Blue Line in its entirety as identified by the United Nations, as well as the need to act with maximum restraint and to refrain from any action that could heighten tension in the area. Lebanese officials, while acknowledging that Lebanese civilians had crossed the Blue Line on 16 and 23 April, conveyed to UNIFIL the limitations faced by the Lebanese Armed Forces in physically stopping Lebanese civilians from attempting to gain access to what they consider Lebanese lands occupied by Israel south of the Blue Line. Nonetheless, they reaffirmed the continued commitment of the Government of Lebanon to respecting the Blue Line in its entirety and pledged their full support for the mission in preventing such violations. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces are discussing how to improve security control and monitoring in these sensitive areas in order to prevent further Blue Line violations.

13. In addition, a number of mostly inadvertent ground violations of the Blue Line were committed, primarily by Lebanese shepherds and farmers tending livestock or working in their fields. Construction workers on the Lebanese side of the Hasbani River, to the south of Ghajar, violated the Blue Line on two occasions with their building equipment, temporarily increasing tension in the area. At least four violations by civilians in the same area also occurred. Those violations highlighted the need for continued progress in the visible marking of the Blue Line. UNIFIL and Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers continued to take action to warn the local population about the position of the Blue Line in an effort to prevent inadvertent violations. Furthermore, on 17 March a foreign national was arrested by the Lebanese Armed Forces for having violated the Blue Line near Addaisseh, and on 4 April a UNIFIL patrol intercepted an apparent attempt at smuggling from Ghajar into Lebanon. The perpetrator subsequently fled back into the village. In addition, verbal abuse and threatening gestures were exchanged by the sides across the Blue Line on several occasions, involving both military personnel and civilians.

14. Steady progress continues to be made in the process of visibly marking the Blue Line. Both parties recently confirmed their agreement to mark a fifth sector, bringing to 38 km the total length of the Blue Line agreed to be marked thus far. As part of the project, UNIFIL demining teams clear minefields and dispose of unexploded ordnance in order to allow access for the measuring of coordinates and the construction of Blue Line markers. Construction work by the Lebanese Armed Forces on the first stage of the Blue Line road project — in which existing roads are being linked through the construction of 11 road connections — is ongoing, with support being provided by UNIFIL engineering assets.

15. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces maintained their respective installations and continued their respective daily operational activities, comprising patrols, checkpoints and observation points, and UNIFIL continued its helicopter patrols. In addition, the two forces continued their joint operational activities, including an average of 15 counter-rocket-launching operations during each 24-hour period and daily coordinated foot patrols along the Blue Line, and operated 12 co-located

checkpoints, six of which are on the Litani River. As called for in resolution 1884 (2009), efforts between the two forces to increase the efficiency of their coordinated activities were ongoing. The Lebanese Armed Forces deployment in the UNIFIL area of operations remained at the level of three heavy brigades. The brigades were complemented by one mechanized battalion and two anti-tank companies, for a total Lebanese Armed Forces strength of some 6,500 soldiers.

16. Moreover, UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued to conduct mostly tactical joint exercises, including one to improve the coordination among the UNIFIL battalion, sector mobile reserves and the Lebanese Armed Forces. Four mediation skills training sessions were conducted to provide Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL officers with conflict sensitivity and conflict resolution skills. The Maritime Task Force continued to provide regular training to Lebanese naval forces at sea and on land.

17. In general, UNIFIL exercised freedom of movement throughout its area of operations, carrying out approximately 10,000 patrols each month. On several occasions, however, mission patrols were temporarily halted by local civilians. In the most serious incident, on 4 March, civilians blocked the route of a UNIFIL patrol investigating, in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, the firing of automatic weapons in the village of As-Suwwanan (Sector West). While carrying out a foot patrol in the village, three UNIFIL personnel were slightly injured, and two UNIFIL vehicles were damaged during a scuffle with civilians who stopped the patrol. On 15 April, UNIFIL military Geographic Information System personnel working in the vicinity of Qabrikha (Sector West) were stopped by a group of four unarmed persons who blocked the road with their vehicles and prevented the mission personnel from continuing their activity or moving away. They took a UNIFIL computer, Global Positioning System equipment and documentation and threatened the peacekeepers. On 17 May, a group of civilians confronted a team of UNIFIL military police investigating a minor traffic accident and took a camera from them. On 21 May, civilians, believing that a UNIFIL patrol in Khirbat Silm (Sector West) had taken photographs of the area, took two small handheld computers from the patrol. On 8 June, UNIFIL military close-protection personnel were stopped by unarmed persons near Ain Ebel, in Sector West, who demanded that they hand over their Global Positioning System equipment. The UNIFIL personnel accompanied the civilians to the Aytaash Shab municipality, where they agreed to hand over the equipment. Subsequently, the UNIFIL vehicle was searched and additional items, including maps, notebooks and working documents, were taken. The Lebanese authorities were able to retrieve all the items and to return them to UNIFIL intact. In addition, Lebanese civilians, including children and youths, threw stones at UNIFIL patrols on a number of occasions, which at times resulted in damage to mission vehicles. As previously reported, UNIFIL activities were occasionally monitored by civilians in various areas.

18. The UNIFIL Force Commander raised the subject of the mission's freedom of movement with the Lebanese authorities and the Lebanese Armed Forces at the highest levels. He received assurances from all officials that UNIFIL would enjoy unimpeded freedom of movement in its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces emphasized the sensitivities involved in patrolling populated areas, which could be seen as intrusive and as infringing on the privacy of the population, or in carrying out specific technical activities that could be misinterpreted. The Lebanese Armed Forces suggested that UNIFIL personnel be accompanied by Lebanese

Armed Forces when carrying out such activities. While the concerns of the civilian population are understood by UNIFIL and taken into account to the extent possible, the mission is obliged to maintain its independent freedom of movement so that it can carry out its mandate.

19. Except with regard to the incidents described above, the attitude of the local population towards UNIFIL remained generally positive. The mission's Civil Affairs and Civilian-Military Cooperation units maintained close contact with local communities, seeking to swiftly resolve any issues that could give rise to problems and to mitigate the effects of the Force's significant operational activities on the daily lives of local residents. The provision of humanitarian, infrastructural, capacity-building and vocational training support through the activities of troop-contributing countries and projects funded from the UNIFIL budget reinforced the strong relations between UNIFIL and the local population.

20. UNIFIL continued to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in taking steps towards the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani River of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006).

21. The Government of Israel maintains that Hizbullah is continuing to build up its military presence and capacity, including within the UNIFIL area of operations. It also charges that Hizbullah has established a military structure inside the villages in southern Lebanon, which includes command and control posts, observation points, weapon storage facilities and specialized combat units. In addition, Israel claims that unauthorized weapons are being transferred into Lebanon, including into the UNIFIL area of operations. In cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, the mission immediately investigates any claim regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel or weapons in the area if specific information is received. To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor found, evidence of the unauthorized transfer of arms into its area of operations.

22. UNIFIL remains determined to act with all necessary means within its mandate and to the full extent provided for in its rules of engagement. However, under its mandate, the mission cannot search private houses and properties unless there is credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity emanating from that specific location. The Lebanese Armed Forces Command reconfirmed that it will act immediately on receiving evidence of unauthorized armed personnel or weapons in the area and put a stop to any illegal activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions, specifically those concerning the illegal presence of armed personnel and weapons south of the Litani River. Furthermore, UNIFIL routinely checked previously discovered former facilities of armed elements in the area of operations, including bunkers and caves, but found no indication that they had been reactivated and no evidence of new military infrastructure in its area of operations. On 18 June, during works being carried out on a road in the vicinity of Ghajar, UNIFIL engineers found approximately 340 kg of explosives buried in the ground. The explosives were in a deteriorating condition and apparently dated from the period before the hostilities in 2006. The explosives were not set to be activated, and there were no detonators attached. UNIFIL informed the Lebanese army and handed over the explosives to the Lebanese authorities.

23. The Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL continued to take coordinated measures aimed specifically at ensuring that there were no armed elements in the area, discovering and removing all weapons and related materiel that might still be present and preventing the possible unauthorized transfer of weapons across the Litani River. These remained objectives requiring long-term sustained efforts.

24. UNIFIL encountered no unauthorized armed personnel in the area of operations during the reporting period other than individuals armed with hunting rifles, who were engaged in hunting activities. In May, the Lebanese Armed Forces once again issued a statement reminding citizens that such activities were in violation of Lebanese law, as well as resolution 1701 (2006). The Lebanese Armed Forces detained a number of individuals and confiscated their weapons; others managed to flee. In addition, armed persons and weapons were present inside Palestinian refugee camps in the area of operations.

25. The Maritime Task Force continued to carry out its dual mandate of conducting maritime interdiction operations in the area of maritime operations and training the Lebanese naval forces. The Lebanese navy continued to contribute successfully to the maritime operations by hailing vessels approaching Lebanese ports and by compiling a recognized local maritime surface picture over the territorial waters with the assistance of the Coastal Radar Organization. Since its mission began, in October 2006, the Maritime Task Force has hailed and queried some 30,500 vessels. Since my previous report, an additional 259 inspections had been carried out as at 21 June on vessels identified as suspicious. Lebanese navy and customs officials inspected the vessels to verify that there were no unauthorized arms or related materiel on board and cleared all of them. During combined maritime interdiction operation exercises, Lebanese navy personnel demonstrated that the navy had gained the ability to conduct such operations and that significant progress had been made in controlling Lebanese territorial waters through the use of the coastal radars. However, Lebanese navy maritime operations remain restricted owing to the lack of an adequate number of vessels, including vessels that can operate in bad weather conditions.

26. Incidents along the line of buoys continued several times per week, with Israel Defense Forces navy units dropping depth charges and firing flares and warning shots along the buoy line. The Israel Defense Forces stated that these were security measures against Lebanese fishing vessels approaching the line of buoys. While UNIFIL has no mandate to monitor the line of buoys, which the Government of Israel installed unilaterally and which the Government of Lebanon does not recognize, the issue has been raised in the tripartite forum, and the Force Commander has expressed his concern that the incidents help to increase tension between the parties.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

27. Tripartite meetings, attended by senior representatives of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces and chaired by the Force Commander, remained a critical mechanism for regular liaison and coordination between UNIFIL and the parties, as well as for building confidence between the parties. Both parties relied on the tripartite forum as the principal mechanism for addressing security and military operational issues related to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

The reports on the investigation into the discovery of explosives south of Al Khiyam on 26 December 2009 and the 31 January 2010 incident involving a Lebanese shepherd were discussed at the meetings. The parties affirmed their commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and the significance of the tripartite meetings in enhancing security and stability.

28. In late April, at a meeting held to consider all aspects of the joint technical review conducted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNIFIL and actions that the Lebanese Armed Forces would take to complement those of UNIFIL, the senior commands of the two forces also held preliminary discussions concerning the development of a strategic dialogue mechanism. The objective of such dialogue would be to review regularly the correlation between the capacities and responsibilities of UNIFIL and those of the Lebanese Armed Forces, with a view to identifying Lebanese Armed Forces requirements for the accomplishment of tasks mandated in resolution 1701 (2006).

29. In addition, UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued their regular interaction at the operational and tactical levels. They maintained daily liaison at relevant levels, including through the placement of Lebanese Armed Forces liaison officers at UNIFIL headquarters and at the sector level, and the placement of a UNIFIL liaison officer at Lebanese Armed Forces headquarters for the South Litani Sector in Tyre.

30. UNIFIL and the Israel Defense Forces also maintained regular and efficient liaison and coordination. The UNIFIL Force Commander maintained effective relations with his Israel Defense Forces counterparts, and other senior Israeli authorities, and UNIFIL liaison officers continued to be co-located at the Israel Defense Forces Northern Command headquarters. No progress has been made in establishing a UNIFIL office in Tel Aviv.

C. Disarming armed groups

31. Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) calls for the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State. Hizbullah continues to maintain a substantial military capacity distinct from that of the Lebanese State, in violation of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). Detailed briefings on Hizbullah's alleged military capacity were recently provided by Israeli military authorities to representatives of the Lebanese Armed Forces and of the United Nations. In public pronouncements during the reporting period, Hizbullah's Secretary-General did not deny that Hizbullah had acquired new weapons, and he noted that it was prepared to respond to attacks by Israel against Lebanon. In a speech on 25 May, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon, Hizbullah's Secretary-General vowed to counter any attack from Israel with a proportional military response. He also stated that Hizbullah would respond to any Israeli maritime blockade of Lebanon by targeting ships bound for Israeli ports in the Mediterranean.

32. On 8 April, an armed clash between members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) in Qossaya, eastern Lebanon, resulted in at least one fatality. That incident highlighted once again the anomaly of

PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases in Lebanon and the threat that they pose to Lebanon's sovereignty. The military bases are beyond the control of the State and, with the exception of Naame, near Beirut, straddle the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, posing an added challenge to Lebanon's control of the border, which is of concern to me. I have called upon the Government of Lebanon to dismantle those bases and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with these efforts. In that regard, I take note of the statement made on 3 March by the leader of Fatah al-Intifada, Abu Musa, that his organization's paramilitary bases could be relocated in coordination with the Lebanese authorities and that Palestinian weapons should be considered part of the discussion on Lebanon's national defence strategy in the National Dialogue. In fact, the National Dialogue decided in 2006 that Palestinian military groups outside the camps should be disarmed, and that decision was reaffirmed in the ministerial statement of November 2009. I believe it is time to make progress on that commitment.

33. It remains my firm conviction that the disarmament of Hizbullah and other militias should be achieved through a Lebanese-led political process. The political process has taken the form of the Lebanese National Dialogue. In accordance with the Doha Agreement of May 2008, the National Dialogue is chaired by the President and has on its agenda the adoption of a national defence strategy, which should, inter alia, address the issue of Hizbullah's arms. On 9 March, President Sleiman reconvened the National Dialogue for the first time since the parliamentary elections of June 2009. Under its new composition, the National Dialogue Committee has 19 participants in addition to the President, representing all major confessions and parties. The Committee held two additional meetings, on 15 April and 17 June.

34. At the meeting of the National Dialogue Committee held on 9 March, participants agreed to proceed with the discussion of a national defence strategy and to seek, through a committee of experts, to find commonalities among the proposals already presented by participants. The statement issued after the 15 April meeting reiterated the agreement among participants to continue discussions on the national defence strategy and encouraged participants to appoint representatives to the committee of experts. The meeting reaffirmed the commitment to agreements reached by the National Dialogue in 2006 and to work on their implementation. An additional meeting of the National Dialogue Committee was held on 17 June, at which the national defence strategy was discussed. It agreed to reconvene on 19 August.

35. Since its reconvening in May 2008, the National Dialogue has served to preserve domestic stability, in particular prior to the parliamentary elections of June 2009 and the municipal elections of May 2010. In compliance with the mandate given to the National Dialogue to arrive at a national defence strategy, a number of participants have presented their positions on this issue. To date, not all participants have nominated their members to the committee of experts, which does not seem to meet regularly. The decision taken by the National Dialogue in 2006 regarding the disarmament of Palestinian military groups outside the refugee camps and security inside the camps, which was included in the commitments undertaken by the Government in its ministerial statement of November 2009, has yet to be implemented. At recent meetings, a number of participants refused to allow the issue of Hizbullah's weapons to be broached, arguing that discussion in the National Dialogue should not serve to question the "resistance" but should, instead, focus on

reaching agreement on a national defence strategy. I encourage participants to remain focused on the development of a national defence strategy that will address the relationship between armed groups and the State, with a view to completing the disarmament of armed militias, as called for by resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006).

D. Arms embargo

36. In resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council called upon the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points so as to prevent the entry of arms and related materiel without its consent. The Council also decided that all States were to prevent the sale or supply of arms and related material to entities or individuals in Lebanon by their nationals or from their territories using their flag vessels or aircraft. During the reporting period, the Government of Lebanon did not report any breach of the arms embargo imposed by resolution 1701 (2006).

37. On 13 April, the President of Israel, Shimon Peres, asserted that the Syrian Arab Republic had provided Scud missiles to Hizbullah, an allegation that was subsequently echoed by other senior Israeli officials. This was reiterated to my Special Coordinator during visits to Israel in late April and early June. Officials emphasized that the Scud missiles were only part of what they regarded as the vast arsenal that Hizbullah had accumulated. Concerns regarding the alleged transfer of sophisticated weapons to Hizbullah were also raised by officials from the United States of America. Lebanese and Syrian authorities have categorically denied that any transfer of such missiles took place. For his part, Hizbullah's Secretary-General stated publicly that he neither confirmed nor denied the acquisition by his party of such weaponry. The United Nations does not have the means to verify that information independently.

38. The allegations concerning the Scud missiles greatly increased tensions between Israel, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period. Rhetoric escalated rapidly, creating the perception among the public that a resumption of conflict was imminent. At the time of the writing of the present report, tensions appeared to have subsided, owing mostly to the messages conveyed by Israeli and Syrian officials making clear that a confrontation was not desired and to the diplomatic actions undertaken by Prime Minister Hariri and several Arab and European Governments, as well as by the United States and the United Nations itself.

39. At the policy level, the Government of Lebanon remains committed to the development of a comprehensive strategy for the management of its borders, in line with the recommendations of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team. Following the announcement by Prime Minister Hariri on 2 February of his commitment to adopting such a national border management strategy, on 3 March the Cabinet appointed a State Minister to oversee the strategy. An initial draft strategy, which was developed in consultation with various security agencies, has been prepared and awaits further examination before transmission to the Cabinet for approval. My Special Coordinator is in close contact with ambassadors from donor countries, which remain committed to supporting the Government's efforts to improve the management of its borders, including the implementation of the

strategy, once it has been made public. Donors would welcome early interaction at the technical level with the Government of Lebanon on this issue.

40. The deployment by Lebanon of security personnel for the effective management of its border with the Syrian Arab Republic remains unchanged. The Common Border Force, comprising some 700 personnel from four Lebanese security agencies (Armed Forces, Internal Security Forces, General Security and Customs), continued its operations along a stretch of 90 km of the northern border. On the eastern border, which has a total length of 210 km, the Lebanese Armed Forces continues to deploy approximately 500 troops and the Internal Security Forces some 200 personnel on a stretch of 80 km immediately adjacent to the area of operations of the existing Common Border Force, with a view to integrating them in a Common Border Force II, which will come into existence once the other two security agencies have assigned personnel to it and the necessary material conditions have been met. The Government expects the support of the international community in order to render the Common Border Force II operational.

41. Inevitably, the effective management of Lebanon's borders continues to be affected by the fact that the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic has not been delineated and by the continued presence of Palestinian military bases which straddle the border between the two countries. Furthermore, the overall management of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic is dependent on the extent to which there is actual cooperation on border management between security agencies from the two countries. I have called upon the Government of Lebanon to dismantle the bases and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with such efforts. According to Lebanese officials, this cooperation is still nascent and requires further development. I am confident that progress will be made in this respect in coming months.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

42. The Lebanese Mine Action Centre continues to coordinate humanitarian clearance operations in southern Lebanon through the Regional Mine Action Centre in Nabatiye. The United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre continues to liaise between UNIFIL and the Regional Centre in respect of operations, accreditation and quality assurance. During the reporting period, four new cluster-bomb strike locations were identified and recorded, bringing to 1,121 the total number of locations to date.

43. During the reporting period, seven incidents involving unexploded ordnance from the 2006 conflict occurred, resulting in injury to six civilians and one deminer. The incidents bring the total number of fatalities and injuries among civilians since the end of the conflict to 30 and 252, respectively, and among demining personnel resulting from clearance activities since August 2006 to 60, with 14 fatalities and 46 injuries.

F. Delineation of borders

44. While the delineation and demarcation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic is a bilateral issue, the Security Council, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 1680 (2006), strongly encouraged the Government of the Syrian Arab

Republic to respond positively to the request by the Government of Lebanon to delineate their common border, especially in those areas where the border is uncertain or disputed, as this would constitute a significant step towards improved management of the border, guaranteeing Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence and improving relations between the two countries. In resolution 1701 (2006), the Council reiterated that call.

45. At their meeting on 14 August 2008, Presidents Al-Assad and Sleiman decided to reactivate the Lebanese-Syrian border committee, which is tasked with delineating and delimiting the border. Since the Government of Lebanon communicated to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic the names of its representatives on the committee, the Lebanese delegation has held a number of preparatory meetings, but a meeting of the full committee with Syrian counterparts has not yet been held. On 15 June, Presidents Sleiman and Al-Assad held a meeting in Damascus during which they agreed to initiate the process of border delineation and demarcation as soon as possible.

46. No progress was recorded on the issue of the Shab'a farms area. In spite of my repeated requests, I have not received any response from Israel, which continues to occupy the area, or from the Syrian Arab Republic to the provisional definition of the area contained in my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) issued on 30 October 2007 (S/2007/641). Syrian officials have continued to affirm their recognition that the Shab'a farms area is Lebanese, but insist on Israel's withdrawal from the area before delineation can occur.

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

47. The safety and security of UNIFIL staff remains a priority. Notwithstanding the obligation of all parties to ensure the safety and security of the Force and the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon for maintaining law and order, UNIFIL continued to apply risk-mitigating measures for its personnel, assets and installations while ensuring mandate implementation. The Force continued to receive security threats during the reporting period. On 23 April, a small quantity (approximately 150 g) of explosives was detected in a civilian vehicle parked outside the UNIFIL Sector East headquarters. UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued their cooperation and joint efforts to ensure that security threats to UNIFIL are addressed appropriately.

48. UNIFIL continued to monitor cases in the Lebanese military court against individuals or groups accused of being involved in planning or attempting to carry out attacks against UNIFIL. One case, against 13 Palestinian defendants who had been accused of, inter alia, forming an armed group, monitoring and attacking the Lebanese Armed Forces and monitoring UNIFIL with intent to attack with explosive devices and weapons, was concluded. The judge sentenced 12 of the 13 defendants — 9 of whom remain at large and were tried in absentia — to prison terms with hard labour and acquitted the other. The judge also sentenced 13 defendants, 11 of whom remain at large and were tried in absentia, and acquitted 1 in a case involving a failed roadside bomb attack on UNIFIL personnel in Tyre in July 2007. A second, related case is ongoing. Court proceedings also began against a group of Palestinians accused of enlisting in an armed terror cell with the objective of, inter

alia, monitoring UNIFIL and carrying out terrorist acts by planting and detonating explosive devices.

49. In the attacks on UNIFIL personnel carried out in July 2007 and January 2008, there are no developments to report in respect of those individuals who have been convicted and sentenced for the attacks but remain at large. Spanish and Lebanese authorities continue their respective investigations, in close cooperation, into the attack on UNIFIL on 24 June 2007, in which six peacekeepers serving with the Spanish contingent were killed. The Spanish investigative judge requested additional information from the Lebanese judicial authorities.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

50. As at 15 June 2010, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 11,769, of whom 477 were women. The mission has 317 international and 655 national civilian staff members, of whom 84 and 165, respectively, are women. UNIFIL is also supported by 53 United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers of the Observer Group Lebanon, none of whom are women. The Nepalese company of 150 personnel arrived in May 2010, as expected, while the armoured personnel carriers were still due to arrive. A Sri Lankan force protection company and a Cambodian demining company are scheduled to join UNIFIL in August. UNIFIL is in the process of implementing the recommendations of the joint technical review conducted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNIFIL, including the recommended adjustments to the force structure, assets and requirements. In accordance with resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, a UNIFIL Gender Unit has been established and a mission-wide gender task force of military and civilian personnel has been initiated.

51. In accordance with the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution 62/265, the Strategic Military Cell will terminate its functions effective 30 June, at which time they will be fully integrated within the reinforced Office of Military Affairs of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (see S/2008/425 para. 58).

52. Italy maintained the leadership of the Maritime Task Force throughout the period. At the time of writing, it was not possible to identify a lead nation for the Maritime Task Force to succeed Italy when its leadership comes to an end on 30 June. Therefore, the Maritime Task Force will temporarily have to carry out its tasks under an onshore command until a lead nation comes forward. UNIFIL and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations have developed a contingency plan in that regard and are putting in place the additional staff and communications requirements for an onshore command arrangement so as to ensure that the Maritime Task Force, as an interim measure, can continue to implement its mandate in a safe and effective manner. Early in May, one frigate and one patrol boat from Bangladesh joined the Maritime Task Force, bringing the total strength to eight vessels, with a composition of two frigates, three corvettes, two fast patrol boats and one supply vessel, complemented by one helicopter.

V. Observations

53. The continued respect of the cessation of hostilities and the Blue Line by Israel and Lebanon is the best guarantee that relative calm will continue to prevail in the area. Yet the situation remains fragile. More work remains to be done by the parties to advance the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and to take the steps recommended in previous reports and reiterated in the present report. It is the responsibility of the parties to focus on all outstanding issues in order to reach a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution, as envisaged in resolution 1701 (2006). At the moment, they are not doing enough in this regard.

54. The new strategic environment and the relative stability prevailing in southern Lebanon that UNIFIL has helped to establish, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, offer a window of opportunity for the parties to make progress on their obligations. As I have stated in previous reports, the opportunity that the UNIFIL presence has created and the existing financial and troop commitments cannot be maintained indefinitely. I have asked my Special Coordinator to engage the parties in a process towards achieving a permanent ceasefire, in close coordination with the UNIFIL Force Commander. I urge the parties to seize the opportunity to make tangible progress in this respect in the coming months.

55. Israel must withdraw its forces from northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006). I urge the Government of Israel to expedite the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the area without further delay. UNIFIL continues to stand ready to facilitate such a withdrawal.

56. I am concerned about the fact that the Israel Defense Forces continue to violate resolution 1701 (2006) and Lebanese sovereignty on an almost daily basis through overflights of Lebanese territory. These overflights create a tense situation and have the potential to trigger an incident that could rapidly escalate. They run counter to UNIFIL objectives and efforts to reduce tensions, and have a negative impact on the credibility of the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL. I call once again on Israel to respect Lebanon's sovereignty by ceasing immediately all overflights of Lebanese territory.

57. I am also concerned about the ground violations of the Blue Line that have occurred in recent months. The inherent risk of escalating the security situation that these incidents carry cannot be overstated. I wish to recall that the identification of the Blue Line in 2000 was solely the responsibility of the United Nations for the practical purpose of confirming the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from Lebanon in compliance with resolution 425 (1978), without prejudice to future border agreements. Both sides, despite their respective reservations in 2000 about the Blue Line, undertook to respect the Line in its entirety as identified by the United Nations. I therefore call on both parties to do their utmost to prevent violations of the Blue Line, to act with maximum restraint and to refrain from taking any measures close to the Blue Line that could lead to misunderstandings or be perceived by the other side as provocative. In particular, the Government of Lebanon must prevent violations of and respect the Blue Line in its entirety.

58. Increased support for the Lebanese Armed Forces remains critical. The Lebanese Armed Forces, in partnership with UNIFIL, play a key role in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). They have continued to act with strong

commitment and resolve, and their capacity has been gradually strengthened with the assistance of international donors. I am grateful to those countries that are helping to equip and train the Lebanese Armed Forces, including the navy, and I urge the international community to continue this critically required support to Lebanese Armed Forces capacity-building. Such support is essential if the Lebanese Armed Forces are to be able to assume effective responsibility for security over the area of UNIFIL operations and the maritime entry points into Lebanon in the future. I welcome the endorsement by the Lebanese authorities of the recommendation of the joint technical review conducted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNIFIL (see S/2010/86) for the formalization of a regular strategic dialogue mechanism between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces, and I call on the Lebanese Government to take the decisions that will enable the process to commence as soon as possible.

59. I am concerned about the incidents during the reporting period that impeded the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and call on the Lebanese Armed Forces to ensure that UNIFIL is accorded full freedom of movement within its area of operations. Some of the restrictions on movement can be explained by the inconvenience caused by the presence of a military force in a civilian environment. Other restrictions, however, when seen together with the continued monitoring of UNIFIL by civilians, cannot but cast doubt on the motives of those involved.

60. I am grateful to all troop-contributing countries for their continued commitment to UNIFIL and to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The need for such continued commitment and support, including the contribution of the troops and assets necessary to enable UNIFIL to efficiently and effectively perform all of its mandated activities on land and at sea, cannot be overstated. I wish to acknowledge the work of the Strategic Military Cell in having provided dedicated military support to UNIFIL since its establishment in 2006, and I have full confidence that the Office of Military Affairs of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will continue to perform its functions after the termination of the Strategic Military Cell on 30 June. I also wish to commend the UNIFIL Force Commander and the military and civilian peacekeeping personnel who continue to play a critical role in helping to promote peace and stability in southern Lebanon, as well as the Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the staff of his Office.

61. I continue to believe that the functioning of the national unity Government in Lebanon provides a unique opportunity to take the measures outlined in the ministerial statement of November 2009 that would result in a strengthening of the Lebanese State. The search for consensus within the Government is critical to the maintenance of domestic stability in Lebanon. At the same time, this should not detract from the full implementation of obligations under resolution 1701 (2006) and other relevant resolutions, which remain the best guarantee for continued stability between Lebanon and Israel and for their progress towards peaceful, long-term arrangements to govern their relations.

62. I call on the friends and neighbours of Lebanon to do their utmost to support the strengthening of the State and the full implementation of Security Council resolutions. In particular, I welcome the marked improvement in the relations between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. I hope that this improvement will translate into progress on those bilateral issues that have a bearing on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

63. The allegations by Israeli authorities regarding the transfer of Scud missiles from the Syrian Arab Republic to Hizbullah resulted in increased tension in the region in late April and early May. That tension once again illustrated the importance of control by Lebanon over its borders and of respect by all Member States for the prohibition against the transfer of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon without the consent of the Lebanese State, which are key elements of resolution 1701 (2006). I continue to be encouraged by the commitment of Prime Minister Hariri to developing a comprehensive border strategy for Lebanon, as called for by the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team, and reiterate the offer of assistance by the United Nations in this respect. I am grateful to Member States that are providing assistance in order to increase Lebanon's border-management capacity and call upon the international community to support future implementation of the country's comprehensive border strategy.

64. I welcome the commitment of the Presidents of Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic to delineating the common border between their countries and look forward to concrete steps being taken in this respect during the coming reporting period. I also intend to continue my diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the issue of the Shab'a farms area. I call once again upon Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic to submit their responses to the provisional definition of the Shab'a farms area that I have provided on the basis of the best available information.

65. The United Nations regularly receives reports and specific allegations that Hizbullah maintains a vast arsenal and a significant military capacity. The United Nations does not have the means to verify this information independently. The presence of armed groups in Lebanon operating beyond the control of the State remains a matter of serious concern to me, as they challenge the ability of the State to exercise its full sovereignty and control over its territory. I continue to believe that the disarmament of armed groups should be carried out through a Lebanese-led political process that would result in bringing all arms under the control of the State. In this respect, I welcome the reconvening by President Sleiman of the National Dialogue Committee, which is mandated to formulate a national defence strategy. I encourage participants to establish a credible process for this endeavour and to adopt benchmarks against which progress could be assessed.

66. I call upon the Government of Lebanon to implement past decisions taken by the National Dialogue with respect to the elimination of Palestinian military bases, some of which straddle the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and to address the issue of arms inside the official refugee camps, in compliance with its ministerial statement. Officials from the Syrian Arab Republic have stated that their Government is ready to support the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to achieve this goal, provided they receive a request from the Government of Lebanon in this respect.

67. The situation of Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon remains a subject of grave concern. I believe that more efforts need to be made to improve their living conditions, while ensuring the peaceful coexistence of the Lebanese and Palestinian communities and without prejudice to the settlement of the Palestinian refugee question in the context of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace agreement. I am concerned about serious shortfalls being faced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in funding for its regular programmes, aimed at delivering basic services to the Palestinian refugees,

and for the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Bared camp, which was destroyed in 2007. I therefore call upon the Government of Lebanon and the donor community to make a concerted effort to address the dire socio-economic situation of the Palestinian refugee community as a matter of priority. I urge the international donor community, including regional countries, to continue and, wherever possible, increase their support for UNRWA activities.

68. While resolution 1701 (2006) is concerned primarily with the situation between Lebanon and Israel, I remain keenly aware that this situation is greatly influenced by dynamics affecting the region as a whole. In particular, the implementation by both parties of their obligations under the resolution takes place in a particular regional context that can either facilitate or render more difficult the actions required for implementation. Tangible progress on the Middle East peace process would have a positive impact on the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and on the stability of Lebanon.

69. I call on both parties to take the steps necessary to achieve what Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) terms a long-term solution that would govern their relations. The achievement of that solution cannot and should not be dissociated from the need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1515 (2003). I call upon the parties and upon all Member States to work decisively towards this goal.